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Grand Rapids, Michigan – August 23, 2007 – United States Attorney Charles R. Gross, Kent County Prosecuting Attorney William A. Forsyth, FBI Resident Agent-In-Charge John King, ATF Resident Agent-In-Charge Mark Hady, and Grand Rapids Police Chief Harry Dolan announced some recent developments in their joint federal-state Violent Crime Task Force, which was formed to combat neighborhood violence in the Grand Rapids area. These developments included federal indictments of six individuals, five of whom are in federal custody, and two of whom have pled guilty.

United States v. Pablo Cuello Torres, 1:06-CR-303 [RHB]. On May 25, 2007, Pablo Cuello Torres, also known as “Totti,” age 21, of Grand Rapids, pled guilty in federal court to two of three counts in an indictment, which was returned by a grand jury on March 7, 2007. Pursuant to the terms of a written plea agreement, Torres pled guilty to possession with intent to distribute five grams or more of cocaine base, commonly referred to as “crack” cocaine, and to possessing a Star 9mm semiautomatic pistol in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. Torres faces a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and a maximum sentence of forty years in prison on the drug charge. He faces a mandatory minimum five years and a maximum sentence of life in prison on the gun charge. By statute, the sentence for the gun charge must be served “consecutive” to the sentence on the drug charge. Torres is scheduled to be sentenced on September 10, 2007, at 1:00 p.m.

United States v. Brandon Jason Flakes, 1:07-CR-113 [GJQ]. On August 15, 2007, Brandon Jason Flakes, age 19, of Grand Rapids, pled guilty in federal court to being a convicted felon in possession of a Smith & Wesson, Model 910, 9mm semiautomatic pistol. The charge stems from a traffic stop in Southeast Grand Rapids on July 22, 2007, during which the firearm was recovered by Grand Rapids Police officers. Flakes faces a maximum sentence of ten years in prison, along with fines and other penalties. Flakes is schedule to be sentence on November 28, 2007.

United States v. Keith Ira Cunningham, 1:07-CR-205 [RJJ]. On August 15, 2007, Keith Ira Cunningham, also known as “Pumpkin Man,” age 26, of Grand Rapids, was indicted by a federal grand jury and charged with possession with intent to distribute marijuana; being a convicted felon in possession of a Smith & Wesson, Model 586, .357 caliber revolver; and possessing that same weapon in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. The drug charge, as alleged, carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison. The felon in possession charge carries a maximum sentence of ten years in prison. The third charge – possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense – is punishable by a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and maximum sentence of life imprisonment, with the sentence to run consecutive to any sentence for the drug offense. According to the allegations contained in a federal criminal complaint, which preceded the indictment, Cunningham is a leader of the “Wealthy Street Boys” gang. Cunningham remains at large.

United States v. Gary Lee Griggs, 1:07-CR-22 [JTN]. On August 22, 2007, Gary Lee Griggs, age 26, of Grand Rapids, was arraigned and entered pleas of not guilty to a three-count indictment charging him with possession with intent to distribute five grams or more of crack cocaine; possession of the same drugs while in the gymnasium of Grand Rapids Central High

School, a public secondary school; and being a convicted felon in possession of ammunition. On December 12, 2006, Grand Rapids Police officers arrested Griggs in the Grand Rapids Central High School gymnasium on an outstanding state court warrant. During a search of Griggs' pants pocket incident to his arrest, police officers allegedly located the crack cocaine and a loaded magazine. Because Griggs has two prior felony drug convictions, if convicted of possessing the crack cocaine on school property, Griggs faces a statutory mandatory sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of release. A trial date has not yet been set.

United States v. Thomas A. Davis, 1:07-CR-191 [RHB]. On August 9, 2007, a grand jury named Thomas A. Davis, age 20, of Grand Rapids, in a single-count indictment, charging him with being a convicted felon in possession of a Bersa, Model Thunder 380, .380 caliber semiautomatic pistol. The charge stems from a traffic stop on July 11, 2007, during which the firearm was recovered by Grand Rapids Police officers and members of the FBI's Violent Crime/Fugitive Task Force. Davis was previously named in a federal criminal complaint charging him with the same offense. On July 18, 2007, Davis was ordered detained pending trial. A trial date has not yet been set.

United States v. Michael Jordan Sallie, 1:07-CR-195 [RHB]. On August 9, 2007, a grand jury named Michael Jordan Sallie, age 21, of Grand Rapids, in a single-count indictment, charging him with being a convicted felon in possession of a Smith & Wesson, Model 910, 9mm semiautomatic pistol. The charge stems from an incident on July 22, 2007, during which Grand Rapids Police responded to a "shots fired" call in Southeast Grand Rapids. Sallie, who allegedly fled police on a bicycle and then on foot, ultimately was apprehended, and a loaded firearm was recovered by police officers along Sallie's flight path. Sallie was ordered detained pending trial. Trial is scheduled for October 9, 2007.

The charges pending against Cunningham, Griggs, Davis and Sallie are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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